
Annual Report

2012



State of New Hampshire

Governor's Commission on Disability

57 Regional Drive

Concord, NH 03301

www.nh.gov/disability

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION
ON DISABILITY

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Cover Letter

Dear Governor Hassan:

On behalf of the New Hampshire Governor's Commission on Disabilities, it is our privilege to submit our annual report on the work of the Commission and staff from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012.

The Commission continued its efforts to help educate and inform New Hampshire residents and visitors on issues important to people with disabilities. Our e-newsletter is presently reaching over 1,000 recipients monthly. Partnering with others, the NH Governor's Accessibility Awards program was successfully continued. This opportunity to recognize individuals and organizations that have gone over and above in providing accessibility to persons with disabilities is off to a great start.

Staff responded to numerous calls and emails from citizens, provided many instances of technical assistance, education and outreach and continued the Commission's ongoing efforts to track data related to the important service of technical assistance and support. Data collected allows us to direct our efforts into subject areas and issues where and when it is most needed. Within this report, much of that data is presented. It is important to note that in addition to staff activities, commission members participated throughout the year in their local communities by providing numerous instances of outreach and advocacy activities.

Our Accessibility Coordinator hosted and spoke at several presentations as well as reviewing numerous buildings for accessibility. Additionally, we worked in collaboration with the New England Americans with Disabilities Act (NEADA) Center to bring high quality, targeted information on accessibility resources and issues into New Hampshire.

We participated in the New Hampshire Emergency Preparedness initiative in an effort to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities will be supported in times of emergency.

The Governor's Commission continued its work with the NH Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (NHVR), particularly regarding the employment of people with disabilities. The commission's executive director and Client Assistance Program ombudsman are members of NHVR's State Rehabilitation Council, which has a legislated oversight and policy setting role for the VR program.

In addition, the Commission reviewed numerous bills during this Legislative Session, supporting numerous bills to enhance people with disabilities' full inclusion and access to community, work and recreation in New Hampshire.

We have continued our ongoing effort to be fiscally responsible and good stewards of tax dollars, having downsized our staff and streamlined our efforts whenever possible.

Looking Forward to 2013

The staff and members of the Commission will continue to seek out new partnerships and collaborative relationships with all stakeholders in order to meet the goals of our mission. Additionally, we will explore ways to utilize social media and technological solutions to reach out to a wider audience. The Commission will be forward-thinking as it looks at research and data to develop its policy recommendations. We look forward to the opportunities and challenges of 2013.

The Commission and staff are appreciative of the support provided by you and your staff in our work with and for our residents and visitors with disabilities. This has been a challenging year, however we proudly report the successes and challenges while looking forward to 2013 and working with you, the legislature, and citizens toward a fully inclusive New Hampshire.

Sincerely,

John W. Richards, MSW, MBA

Executive Director

History / Mission / Vision

In 1978, RSA 275:C established the Governor's Commission on Disability, with the purpose of becoming a voice for the more than 190,000 New Hampshire citizens with disabilities, in all facets of life, including state government.

During 2011, the Commission engaged in a strategic planning process over the course of several meetings and struggled with a variety of challenging questions. The following Mission and Vision statements evolved:

Mission

To remove the barriers, [be they] architectural or attitudinal, which bar persons with disabilities from participating in the mainstream of society.

Vision

New Hampshire – A state where disability doesn't matter and quality of life counts.

Tag Line

The Voice of New Hampshire's Disability Community

Goals and Strategies

The Commission's strategic plan was developed in 2011 and is included in its entirety as Appendix A. The goals of the strategic plan are directly excerpted from the enabling legislation in RSA 275:C. The strategies were formed via a retreat process conducted by the Commission's members and staff.

Ongoing Policy Concerns

As the reader is aware, The Governors Commission on Disability makes a concerted effort to cross disability boundaries and lines, with concern about all of the many types of disabilities that exist. There are approximately 190,000 people with disabilities living in the state of New Hampshire (US Census figures) covering the spectrum of issues from hearing impairments, vision loss, cognitive impairments, impaired mobility and a host of issues brought on by a range of injuries, diseases and medical syndromes. In spite of the wide range of etiology of disabilities, there are several consistent themes that we hear frequently. Most common are:

- **The need for employment opportunities**, and for employers to offer flexibility and accommodations ranging from minor to major.
- A **lack of education and awareness** about specific disabilities, issues, and etiquette.
- **Transportation.** As the reader is aware, New Hampshire is not covered by a wide range of far-reaching public transportation providers. This situation is made further difficult for those who are not able to drive and funding for wheelchair accessible vans is especially limited.
- **Public policy advocacy and assistance** --- “navigating the system” – basically understanding what supports are out there and how to reach them is an ongoing challenge.
- **Housing**, most particularly accessible housing, is in very short supply in New Hampshire. People utilizing section 8 services are looking at many years of waiting for accessible housing.
- And last, but not least, it will surprise no one to hear that a **lack of funding** is an ongoing concern. Waiting lists are a significant problem. Further, disability and poverty nationally, and in New Hampshire specifically, typically go hand-in-hand.

Commission Membership

From RSA 275:C:

“There is hereby established the governor's commission on disability which shall consist of 30 members appointed by the governor. At least 15 commission members shall be persons with a disability or parents or guardians of persons with a disability. There shall be 20 members appointed from the general public and 10 shall be appointed from organizations which provide services for persons with disabilities. Each member of the commission shall serve, without compensation, for a 6 year term and until his successor is appointed and qualified, provided that of the initial members appointed hereunder, 10 shall serve for 2 years, 10 for 4 years and 10 for 6 years, as designated by the governor.”

The members of the Governor’s Commission, as of 12/31/2012, are as follows:

Bergevin, Jerry

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Paul Van Blarigan CHAIRPERSON

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Marie-Helene Bailinson (Ex-Officio)

Zandy Dezonie

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Joan Marcoux, MA, CRC (Ex-Officio)

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Lisa Hatz (Ex-Officio)

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Organizational Structure

The Governor's Commission on Disability is governed by the commission itself, which is comprised of 30 gubernatorial appointees who represent a broad range of individuals and organizations. The commission has an executive committee of three persons who are actively involved with oversight of activities. Day-to-day Operations of the commission are managed by the Executive Director, John W Richards, MSW, MBA. The staff of the commission is as follows:

- Jillian Shedd, M Arch: Accessibility Coordinator
- Bill Hagy: Ombudsman for the Client Assistance Program
- Gayle Baird: Accountant, Payroll and Human Resources Coordinator
- Carol Conforti-Adams, MEd, CDF: (Part-time) Information and Referral Specialist
- Paula Ninivaggi - (Part-time) Statewide Independent Living Coordinator
- Sally Creighton: SCSEP --- Volunteer
- Currently the Clerk Interviewer/Secretary II position is posted

Finances

The Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD), like the rest of the state's Agencies, operated under difficult conditions due to the continued distressed economy. Staff rose to the challenge of covering the tasks and duties of personnel lost during this process. They were able to join forces and resources to comply with Federal and State statutes as well as Grant Mandates to get the jobs done. Our original budget appropriation was \$683,545.00 and after reductions, lapses and programmatic cuts, we wound up with \$646,551.00 (94%) in expenditures for the year. Our non-General Funds amounted to \$299,794.61 leaving only \$346,756.39 in General Funds or 53% of our total budget.

Budget Summary:

Operating Costs	73,107
Program Costs	145,650
Personnel Costs	427,794
	646,551

Affiliated Programs

The Commission is closely connected with several related organizations with congruent goals and values.

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC)

“Working Together for Independent Living In New Hampshire”

www.silcnh.org

For a complete report from SILC, please see Appendix B.

CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP)

For a complete report from CAP, please see Appendix C.

Committees of the Commission

INTERNAL COMMITTEES

The Commission has organized the following standing and ad-hoc committees.

- **Architectural Barriers Free Design Committee (RSA 275:C14):**
 - I. Establish, publish, and enforce a code for barrier-free design ...
 - II. Adopt such rules under RSA 541-A as may be necessary to enforce the provisions of this subdivision and the code for barrier-free design.
 - III. Hold public hearings prior to the adoption of any rules by the committee in accordance with RSA 541-A.
- **Legislative Committee** - follows and studies activities of the legislature as they pertain to people with disabilities in New Hampshire. The committee may advise or inform elected officials in matters pertaining to people with disabilities.
- **ADA coalition** - focuses on and advocates for ways to make the state of New Hampshire as accessible as possible to all people with disabilities.
- **Parking Committee** - works with a variety of stakeholders including law enforcement organization on issues related to availability of accessible parking and the enforcement of accessible parking rules and laws.

- **Nominations Committee** – recruits and screens prospective candidates for membership on the Commission.
- **Telecommunications Committee** Provides oversight and acts in an advisory capacity to the Technology Equipment Distribution Grant (currently with NH Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services) and News line for the Blind (funds flow through GCD from the Public Utilities Commission)

Schedules for committee meetings are posted on the Commission's website at www.nh.gov/disability .

EXTERNAL COMMITTEES

Staff and members of the Governor's Commission coordinate or are active participants on the following external committees, councils and task forces:

- Medicaid infrastructure grant committee
- Business leadership awards planning committee
- Traumatic Brain Injury and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Veterans Commission
- Statewide Rehabilitation Council
- Commission on Deafness and Hard of Hearing
- Quality Services Council
- Board of Directors of the Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire
- Wheelchair Health in Motion
- Statewide Coordinating Council for Transportation
- Statewide Independent Living Council
- Self Advocacy / Voting Committee
- NH Building Officials Association
- Medical Care Advisory Committee
- NH Emergency Preparedness Committee

Statistics

Technical Assistance and Information Calls via Telephone: 1062

Beyond The Barriers (Newspaper column): 37

GCD E-Newsletters (monthly): 10

Events and Public Awareness Activities:

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total for 2012
Trainings Given	7	7	2	2	18
Trainings Attended	17	9	3	7	36
Number of People Trained	74	220	50	42	386
Technical Assistance- Phone, email & In person	391	398	449	283	1521

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Public Awareness Activities	8	22	24	31	85
Website Hits	17296	16981	17313	13745	65335

Materials Disseminated

- NH town & City Magazine -2/12 re: ADA Accessibility Training & Grant Opportunity
- ADA Accessibility Training & Grant Opportunity
- NH Right to Vote Coalition request for proposals for voting coordinator
- NH DRCNH Rap Sheet
- ANSI Chapters
- IBC Chapters 11, 34
- ADA 2010 Standards
- Comparison Matrix for IBC vs. ADA
- ADAAG
- ADA Technical Manual
- NH Checklist By the Abfd Committee
- NH Building Code Amendments
- ADA Public Accommodation Checklists
- NH Architectural Barrier Free Design Code
- UFAS Public Rights of Way Guidelines
- Social Etiquette for interacting with the Disabled Community
- Ramp Design Guidelines via IBC
- Accessibility & You- Title III Self Reviews
- What the GCD can do for you!
- Parking Standards
- Title I, II & III Fact sheets
- Parking Violation Fact Sheet
- Respect the Stripes- Access Aisle Bulletin
- Toilet Room Plan – Recommended by AB Committee
- Service Dog Fact Sheet
- SSDI Determination Requirements
- EMS Preparedness
- Fact Sheet on SSDI
- DOJ Fair Housing Info
- Voc Rehab List of Services
- Fact Sheet on H&HS Benefits
- After high school rule changes
- GCD E-newsletter monthly
- GCD Flyer
- SILC Flyer
- CAP Flyer
- Architectural Barrier Free Design Committee Flyer
- Gas Assistance Flyer
- Service Dog Fact Sheet
- ADA Title I Fact Sheet
- How to Vote- Your NH Rights!
- Beyond the Barriers- NH Union Leader every week
- Research reports/conference proceedings
- ADA Employment Web Course Title I
- Disability Rights Overview Web Course
- ADA Title III Web Course
- Universal Design in the Workspace Web Course
- Updated Checklist for Existing Facilities
- Updated Title II Action Guide
- New Title III Action Guide

List of trainings

ADA Basic Building Blocks – (www.adabasics.org) 11/18/2011 Jillian Shedd & 10/15/11 Carol Conforti-Adams

At Your Service: Welcoming Customers with Disabilities (www.wiawebcourse.org) 11/23/2011 Jillian Shedd

ADA Employment Web Course Title I JLS attended 12/22/11

ADA Tutorial: Title II of Americans with Disabilities Act (www.adacourse.org/title2/index.php) 11/28/2011 Jillian Shedd

Disability Rights Overview Web Course JLS completed 12/22/11

Ticket to Work - National Work Incentives Seminar Event (WISE) Webinar 12/21/2011 Jillian Shedd

New England ADA Center Disability Rights Laws Overview Course Web course and Final Exam was 80% 12/22/2011 Jillian Shedd

New England ADA Center ADA Employment Course Final Exam was 95%. 12/28/2011 Jillian Shedd

Wheelchair Health in Motion (WHIM) Trainings Performed by Carol Conforti-Adams 10/30/2011

Jillian Shedd, The Governor's Commission on Disabilities and You!, GCD, 1/27/2012

Jillian Shedd, Accessibility & You!, GCD, 3/7/12

Mid Atlantic ADA Center, Accessibility and the ADA: Facility Standards Update, 3 week Webinar series= 1/31/12, 2/7/12, 2/14/12, Jillian Shedd

ADA Conferences Team Great Lakes ADA Center, Accessibility Online Webinar – Accessible Courthouses & Courtrooms, 2/2/12, Jillian Shedd

ADA Conferences Team Great Lakes ADA Center, Accessibility Online Webinar – 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, 3/1/12, Jillian Shedd

Carol Conforti Adams, Transition planning, GCD, 2/10/12

Carol Conforti Adams, WHIM – Wheelchair Health In Motion, GCD, Multiple trainings (5)

John Richards attended the ADA Spring Symposium in Orlando Florida- See Attached sheets for more information.

APPENDIX A - GCD STRATEGIC PLAN

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Note – the goals are taken directly from RSA 275:C.

GOAL 1: Advise state government and the public on matters pertaining to living with a disability in New Hampshire.

Strategy A: Develop relationships with, support, and inform our elected officials on disability related matters.

Priority: High and ongoing

1. Provide information and resources to our constituents.
2. Testify as needed and requested at state legislative hearings.
3. Respond to specific requests for information regarding legislation of importance to the disability community.
4. Build relationships with elected officials.

Strategy B: Gather relevant and meaningful data re: living with a disability in New Hampshire.

Priority: Ongoing

1. Track information and referral call data to understand sources and numbers of requests for information.
2. Develop and implement a feature on our website “telling our stories” to better inform the public what living with a disability is like.
3. Offer awards, commendation, recognition, and engage the media to promote awareness of those who excel in providing support to people with disabilities.

Ongoing thru the Governor’s Accessibility Awards

4. Research and write a “white paper” that attempts to address the question: What makes NH a state that is a good place for all people, including individuals with a full range of disabilities to live, work, enjoy recreation as full participants in the state. Amend the factors to be considered: accessibility, supports, auxiliary aids and services and a service delivery system that meets the need of our citizens with intellectual disabilities, sensory impairments, physical disabilities, emotional/psychiatric disabilities, chemical and significant health impairments, including addiction. Part 2 of the white paper will answer the initial question for NH.)

5. Engage the media through public services announcements, human interest stories, and publications of awards and other recognition projects.
6. Ensure that all staff attend ADA trainings and teleconferences and that they attend refresher courses periodically. Ongoing
7. Establish positions in-house to collect and document data on various disability related matters and/or topics discussed above. Once means of achieving some of the more involved goals have been determined, the scope and Supplemental Job Description (SJD) can be created to justify the need for essential services. Prevented by budgetary constraint
8. Ensure that all committees, hearings, meetings, etc., comply with ADA Title II at all levels of state government for both aural and oral communication (i.e.: general funding pool for sign language interpreters, Computer Assisted Real Time (CART) captioning services, or Assistive Listening Devices or providing auxiliary aids in all conference rooms utilized by state entities) and making us the first state in the nation to do so (making NH the primary example around the nation). Budgetary constraints
9. Complete the annual report to the Governor and legislature.

Done.

GOAL 2: To provide informed advice to state government and the public about the adequacy of programs, plans and budgets for services for people with disabilities.

Strategy A: Support and encourage active GCD committees which address housing, finances, social opportunities, transportation and recreation for people with disabilities.

See list of committees above.

1. Ensure a GCD presence on state committees and commissions addressing these issues.
2. Provide technical assistance RE: ADA and other related matters.

Strategy B: Participate in emergency and disaster planning efforts specific to people with disabilities.

Ongoing

Strategy C: Conduct educational seminars and trainings as needed and requested to heighten awareness of disability issues. See data above.

1. Provide technical assistance and support as needed and requested.

Strategy D: Collaborate with the Secretary of State to ensure full accessibility to voting in NH.

GOAL 3: Encourage cooperation and collaboration amongst state government and private agencies to all services and supports to people with disabilities.

Strategy A: Collaborate with other state agencies and commissions regarding disability issues. ***Ongoing***

1. Provide monthly e-newsletter re: disability related events.

Monthly publication

2. Collaborate on disability-related grant requests
3. Work with New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation on specific employment related initiatives.
4. Update state agencies and local government officials re: ADA and accessibility issues.
5. Provide demographic and disability related information as needed and requested regarding needed supports and services.

GOAL 4: Provide information and education to the public about services and supports to persons with disabilities. Promote heightened awareness of disability issues.

Strategy A: Provide individual information and referral information.

1. Respond to all information and referral calls within 24 hours with complete and accurate information. ***Ongoing***
2. Track data re: information and referral call topics. ***Ongoing***

Strategy B: Speak publicly and present as requested to state entities and public groups. ***See list of trainings above.***

1. Offer internet based webinars and presentations to promulgate information.
2. Offer timely and accurate information regarding available federal benefits and programs and tax incentives for landlords and business owners.
3. Develop a speakers bureau, possibly including Toastmasters group, for statewide presentations at civic, community & church groups.
4. Collaborate with the Bureau of Education and Training to hold ADA compliance training.

5. Ask the governor to present accessibility awards. Done.
6. Ask the Gov. to sign house Bill 398.

Strategy C: Offer information and education re: our legislative process.

1. Provide at least two legislative trainings yearly to advocates, professionals, and family members. Next scheduled for March 1, 2013

Strategy D: Expand our outreach efforts.

1. Expand e-newsletter mailing list to 1,000 subscribers. Now over 1,000.
2. Issue regular press releases regarding matters related to disability.
See Beyond the Barriers.
3. Collaborate with New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation and other disability agencies to recognize and encourage companies and groups who excel in supporting people with disabilities.
Ongoing – Employment Leadership Awards Conference – October
4. Retool, revamp and update our website to offer videos, timely information, links, and webinars. Note – numerous website hits. One video added; limitations on state bandwidth.
5. Develop and implement PSAs and other media to heighten disability awareness. Funding limitations.

GOAL 5: To research, create, and advocate for plans, programs, and policies which will serve the needs of people with disabilities, including a census of services and unmet needs.

Strategy A: Widen our scope and presence thru active participation with other disability specific groups.

1. Attend at least six (6) disability related conferences per year. Funds limited.

Strategy B: Develop research and write “white papers” on specific topics of interest to the disability community.

1. Develop and solicit a list of topics.
2. Draft “white papers” for widespread distribution; largely on our web site.

Strategy C: Encourage people with disabilities to participate in leadership roles.

1. Actively seek leaders in the disability community to fill positions on committees and subcommittees (See Goal 7 below.)

Strategy D: Offer discussion and support groups, either in person or online, on relevant “cross-disability issues” e.g. adjustment to disability, coping with disability challenges, etc.

1. Market and sponsor a preliminary “adjustment to disability” support group.

GOAL 6: To annually report on the adequacy of the efforts of New Hampshire as a whole in supporting the needs of persons with disabilities.

Strategy A: Submit an annual report by December of each year.

GOAL 7: Internally within the Governor’s Commission on Disability:

Strategy A: Support and encourage all GCD members to be actively involved in at least one internal committee.

1. Ensure that the GCD is represented for a “disability awareness focus” on all relevant state councils, commissions, task forces, etc.

Strategy B: Support our Bylaws and Rules Committee to review/revisit our existing bylaws and rules.

1. Call first meeting in May 2011.
2. Consider this committee functioning as a nominations committee and develop a process for same. Nominations committee functioning & meets regularly.
3. Review RSA 275: C with regard to the statutes and possible name change.

Determined inexpedient at this time.

4. Clarify mechanism & system to identify and approve new prospective members. Per nominating committee.

Strategy C: Support and encourage interns and volunteers to work for the GCD and thereby develop an interest in working with people with disabilities.

Presently have a legal volunteer.

1. Contact local social work and human services colleges.

Strategy D: Enhance and strengthen the Governor’s Commission on Disability membership.

1. Develop an “orientation to GCD and disability issues in New Hampshire”.
Done

2. Select and implement an active “nominations committee” to identify & track terms of members; plan for vacancies & screen prospective candidates.
Done
3. Finalize development of internal policy and procedures manual for all staff and the commission itself.
Done

APPENDIX B – STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

Annual Report of the Statewide Independent Living Council

Reporting Period January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012

The New Hampshire Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is created in Title VII, of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The Council's members are appointed by the Governor. The Council is a cross-disability, statewide, volunteer council; representing the independent living needs of people with significant disabilities in New Hampshire. The mission is to provide leadership and advocacy in support of the independent living philosophy for persons with significant disabilities. The philosophy of independent living includes: individual control, peer support, self-help, and self-determination to maximize the independence, inclusion and productivity of people with disabilities.

While the SILC is housed in the Governor's Commission on Disability, it is fully funded by Federal resources from Title VII, by the NH Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation. The majority of SILC volunteer members have first hand knowledge of disabilities and services. This gives the SILC a broad knowledge of independent living services and gaps statewide. The SILC and the GCD work collaboratively on activities to improve the lives of citizens living with disabilities in New Hampshire. In 2011 the SILC increased the number of items contributed for publication in the GCD's weekly Union Leader newspaper column "Beyond the Barriers." The column provides people living with disabilities and the general public information on community services, events, programs, trainings related to disability. In 2011 the SILC collaborated with the GCD in hosting presentations and trainings by AARP and the New Hampshire Red Cross. In 2011 the SILC collaborated with other agencies and disability entities on taskforces focused on: benefits, healthcare, and housing.

SILC Information and Resource Newsletter:

The SILC produces a free electronic monthly Information and Resource Newsletter. This newsletter has information and resources for: people living with disabilities, families, agency staff, providers, the general public, etc. Topics include: mental health, housing, financial, health and wellness, recreation, disability awareness, disaster preparedness, transition, veterans, older adults, disability laws, employment, community resources substance abuse, assistive technology, bullying, education, events, trainings, and more. Reflecting the growing diversity of New Hampshire information on different cultures and languages is included in the SILC Newsletter.

Begun in 2008, the newsletter distribution list grew from 100 to over 1,000 statewide. Forwarding of the newsletter is estimated to be 3,000. The newsletter reaches: people living with disabilities, families, disability and health and human service organizations schools, libraries, community gathering places, businesses, town clerks, senior centers, state agencies, veteran's organizations, and more. The newsletter serves a basis for other groups' resource lists.

In 2011 the SILC received over 100 accolades on the Newsletter. The following are examples, of the helpfulness and positive impact on the lives of NH citizens the SILC Newsletter had in 2011.

“The SILC newsletter helps so many people by providing tips on healthy eating, recreation, disaster preparedness, etc. A full gamut for everyone's needs. “

“Thank you for your hard work for community!!” Youth Outreach/Job Placement Specialist.

“This is a great help. I will pass it along to other local agencies that I think would like to get it in the future as well.”

“Thank you for putting the special edition out around emergency preparedness and then having it back to back with your Resource Newsletter. They are both very helpful and I use them a lot. “

“Is this newsletter helpful? YES!!!!!! I use it constantly and keep back issues in a file in my drawer to access when needed. I really appreciate the time and effort it takes.”

Disasters and SILC Response:

The SILC Disaster Planning Resource list continued to be helpful in 2011. The SILC Disaster Preparedness List focused on the specific needs of people living with disabilities helping to fill in the gaps. Towns posted the list on their websites. The help the Resource List provided is shown in the following examples:

- Per an Autism Family Support Specialist and Trainer: “Thank you so much for the resources! I have 4 statewide trainings in the upcoming months so I will pass it along. I will also send it out to 600 families.”

- Another statewide organization helping people living with disabilities in NH posted on their website: “NH’s Statewide Independent Living Council has developed a "must have" list of disaster emergency preparedness resources. It is important for everyone to be prepared for emergencies before they occur. When a family includes an individual with disabilities, additional planning may be needed”

Heat Wave

In July New Hampshire experienced a deadly heat wave. People living with disabilities and older adults were deemed most vulnerable and at risk. As a New Hampshire older adults group wrote in their August Newsletter “There was an immediate need for distribution of critical information concerning cooling centers and resources dealing with extreme heat.” NHSILC became a clearinghouse for information on dealing with the extreme heat. To ensure the information would be accessible to people who are Blind a person who is blind was asked to review the information. The majority of this work was done by people who in some cases had never met each other but worked together for a common purpose to help their fellow citizens. In some cases the persons were private citizens volunteering their time, putting aside other plans. Staff from the various agencies involved also put aside their work plans for the day to focus on this emergency. As the organization serving older adults wrote in their newsletter “activation of such systems can create momentum for even greater capacity and effect.”

NHSILC sent information statewide to: agencies and councils serving people with disabilities, community organizations, child and family agencies, older adult organizations, homeless organizations, culturally diverse organizations, veterans groups, and organizations, medical providers, mental health agencies, Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Health and Human Services, Developmental Disabilities Council, social service agencies, senior centers, people living with disabilities, and more. These individuals and groups then forwarded the resources on. The information was posted on various websites.

Hurricane Irene

In August of 2011 New Hampshire was hit with powerful hurricane Irene. The NHSILC was asked to collaborate on a resource list to help people with disabilities prepare for the Hurricane. The Developmental Disabilities Council along with the Red Cross and the NH Department of Health and Human Services fed the SILC information and resources. SILC members and staff gathered and updated additional information, putting it into an accessible, easy to use document. The list was developed and widely disseminated in under four hours. The list was forwarded put on a number of community and disability websites. The Hurricane Resource List was also forward to others in the New England Region by the Office of Regional Administrator, FEMA. Examples of feedback received were:

“Thank YOU for putting together the resource. Super Job! I've forwarded the list . . . to post on the Ready NH website and also on website used by local Emergency Management Directors.”

“I just wanted to thank you for sending out to us . . . the list of emergency information sites. I posted it on my website and referred, and was thanked for it.”

“A comprehensive one on hurricane preparedness in NH, especially for people with Disabilities. Thanks for your efforts for people with disabilities.”

Mental Health

In October in response to the increase in the number of suicides in New Hampshire, the SILC collaborated with the Bureau of Behavioral Health, the New Hampshire Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and the Northern New England Geriatric Education Center on a Mental Health Resource List. Feedback received included:

“Thank you, for this very valuable information. I am very glad to have it. I am sure that the statistics for suicide, and overall rates of mental illness, depression, etc., have increased as a sign of the difficult times in which we live. Even more reason why this information is so valuable to those of us in the medical field. “

“I’m in graduate school to become a mental health counselor and this information is invaluable for me.”

"I passed your resource list on to a friend of mine who is a high school guidance counselor. She said it was a great resource and she is glad to have it. If you're not already passing it on to high schools, you might want to consider doing that."

More information on the SILC including the taskforce and can be found at:

www.silcnh.org.

Contact information for the SILC is:
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
c/o Governor's Commission on Disability
57 Regional Drive
Concord, NH 03301
603-271-0476
1-800-852-3405 ext. 0476
paula.ninivaggi@nh.gov

APPENDIX C – CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM – VR

Report of the Client Assistance Program

MISSION AND PURPOSE

Congress authorized and funded a nationwide network of Client Assistance Programs (CAP) in the 1984 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 98-221). The enactment of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-220) expanded the CAP's mission to include a partnership in the local One-Stop Board. The mission of the CAP is to inform and advise applicants and clients of programs funded by the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, and of all benefits under the Act. When requested and appropriate, the CAP provides individual advocacy for clients in their relationships with projects, programs and facilities, including the pursuit of legal, administrative or other appropriate remedies, to ensure the protection of their rights under the Act.

In New Hampshire, programs funded by the Act include the NH Vocational Rehabilitation (NHVR), the Older Blind and Vocational Rehabilitation services provided through the office of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI), and various community rehabilitation programs. The CAP continues to provide its Guide to Vocational Rehabilitation Services, information and referral to facilitate access to services and benefits available in New Hampshire, and to educate the public on policies, procedures and services. CAP is an active member of the State Rehabilitation Council.

ADMINISTERING (HOST) AGENCY

The CAP is housed within the Governor's Commission on Disability which places it appropriately within the Executive Department of the State. This is very important since its protective and advocacy responsibilities require that it not be colocated within an organization over which it has a monitoring role. Also, being located within the commission the CAP is able to continue to work on improving the quality and delivery of services for individuals with disabilities in the State of New Hampshire, as it has done since 1984.